THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (d) The information sought by the Hon'ble Member cannot be divulged in public interest.

Uniform land policy for major ports

4910. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering the proposal to come out with a uniform land policy for major ports in the country, as reported in the Statesman, dated the 22nd April, 2002.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the major ports in the country are having surplus land etc. and facing financial crunch to meet day-to-day expenses; and

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to take to dispose of the surplus lands of the major ports and to make them financially sound?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, there may be some similar features in the land policies of Kolkata and Mumbai Ports.

(c) The development and expansion of ports and port dependent activities in the area of port land is a continuous process. It is difficult to indicate the surplus land in different ports as its utilization is linked with the development in future. Except Kolkata Port Trust, no other port is facing financial crisis to meet day-to-day expenses.

(d) This Ministry asked all major ports to prepare land use plan for efficient utilization of the entire land in their possession, including vacant land, if any.

Administrative reforms of ports in the country

4911. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to introduce administrative reforms of ports in the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that working group of Planning Commission has made some recommendations in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (c) Administrative reforms in the major ports are carried out as part of an ongoing process to improve management practices, operational efficiency, cost effectiveness and service quality. The Working Group for the Port Sector for Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) has recommended measures, *inter-alia*, aimed at improvements in equipment productivity, equipment maintenance, disposal of surplus equipment, labour productivity, optimisation of work force, training and optimal use of information technology.

Introduction of tonnage tax for shipping industry

4912. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a proposal for imposing tonnage tax in lieu of corporate tax for shipping industry;

(b) if so, the details of such proposal;

(c) whether it is also a fact that an Expert Committee has been constituted to look into the desirability of introducing Tonnage Tax Act;

(d) if so, whether the Committee has submitted report; and

(e) if so, the recommendations of the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. The Rakesh Mohan Committee constituted by the Government to review Indian Shipping and to recommend measures has submitted its report to the Government. The Committee has recommended that, recognizing the role of shipping in the national economy, a conducive fiscal regime should be provided so that Indian shipping can be internationally competitive. To facilitate this, Indian shipping companies may be given an option to opt for Tonnage Tax system to be introduced with effect from the financial year 2002-2003. While, this step should substantially help to check stagnation in the growth of Indian shipping tonnage, the option to continue to remain within the Corporate Tax regime may also be provided so that those companies which prefer to be under that regime, can do so.